Halifax Housing Authority Annual Report

1990

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Mission and Goals - tools for future use

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Mission Statement

To advocate for and manage housing related resources that will provide quality physical environments and social development.

Goals

Administration	To plan, manage and evaluate the resources.
Finance	To budget for and monitor the financial resources of the Authority.
Operations	To provide consistent, effective administration for the safety, security and well being of the tenants.
Tenant Services	To match physical resources with applicant and tenant needs and determine effective program development.
Personnel	To select, develop, train and administer human resources.
Maintenance	To maintain the integrity of the physical assets.
Public Relations	To develop and maintain a positive public image internally and externally.

Board of Directors

Dr. Margaret Bateman Ellison	Chairperson - Professor, Mount Saint Vincent University
Mr. David Black	Black & Associates Accounting Services Ltd.
Mrs. Linda Carvery	Homemaker
Mr. John Cooper, Q.C.*	Lawyer, Crowe Dillon Robinson
Mr. James Dickie	Senior Account Manager, Hongkong Bank of Canada
Mr. William Hayter	President, CBH Management Ltd.
Mr. James MacLean	Lawyer, Block & MacLean
Mr. Glen Johnson (resigned October, 1990)	Lawyer

* Incoming chairman

Chairperson's message

Tenants come first.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present this 1990 annual report as a record of our attempt to have tenants come first in building better housing communities.

During 1990 the Authority contributed to ensuring a better tomorrow for tenants through several initiatives. In addition to upgrading facilities, improving visual appeal, comfort, convenience and security, tenant activities were expanded and supported. A youth support group, the Grass Roots Grocery, volunteer and life skills programs for women, a summer job strategies program, a learning centre and day care centres, all now are available for Halifax Housing Authority youth and families. Positive interpersonal skills and attitudes have been fostered in the Halifax Housing Authority youth through recreation programs in arenas both within and outside the public housing project. Plus continued efforts to obtain grants and donations have made a range of services available to seniors in Gordon B. Isnor Manor.

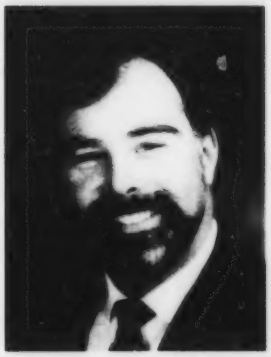
Our employees have shown their commitment to the Authority through participating in personal development programs. Teamwork throughout the Halifax Housing Authority is evident within each project and at the management level. Senior management must be acknowledged for their leadership, professionalism and ability to build partnerships with agencies and organizations in the community and province.

In September a milestone was reached when the physical regeneration of Uniacke Square was completed. However, it is the change in resident attitudes, tenant involvement and improving neighbourhood atmosphere in recent months that have made the milestone truly a regeneration.

Nineteen ninety marks the end of a five year evolution that has taken the Authority from primarily managing physical facilities to realizing the provision of quality physical environments and making a tangible commitment to social development. The board wishes to thank staff and tenants for their initiative toward ensuring that there will be a better tomorrow for the Halifax Housing Authority and the greater community. We trust that the next decade continues in this direction as well.

Margaret Bateman Ellison
Chairperson

General Manager's message



This report features a number of programs and initiatives taking place in many of our communities. The central focus of each of the programs is to provide opportunities; opportunities for residents to help themselves and to foster change from within.

Most of the initiatives have been conceived and are being run by the residents while others are operated jointly by the residents and organizations such as the City of Halifax Library, the provincial and municipal social services departments and, of course, the Halifax Housing Authority.

Many resident associations and tenant groups recognize that children are a key to the future. If lasting change is to be developed, significant resources will have to be devoted to ensuring that youth make the most of the opportunities which can be made available. Hence, the emphasis on tutoring, youth support groups and education upgrading.

The common characteristic of all the initiatives and the key to their success is that the residents are the driving force. They are ensuring the programs' continued success and have proven to be very enterprising and extremely resourceful. In fact, most of the residents are selflessly giving of their time and energy and many are flourishing in their roles.

I would be remiss if I did not thank Dr. Ellison and the Board of Directors for their support, the staff of the Halifax Housing Authority for the dedicated approach to their work and the Nova Scotia Department of Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the City of Halifax for their continued financial backing.

Michael H. Spencer
General Manager

Building Better Communities – ensuring a better tomorrow.

A commitment to helping residents come first was a central objective during 1990. Through a variety of programs and staff/tenant initiatives, many residents' groups were able to make visible progress in their own special sphere of endeavour. At the same time the Halifax Housing Authority maintained its mandate to administer a wide variety of properties in Halifax and under this umbrella the Authority experienced a 17% increase in the numbers of families and senior citizens seeking assistance. Two hundred and eighty units became available within the family housing portfolio with the balance of 124 units allocated for senior citizens, for a total of 404. The current rate of unit availability permits the Authority to have a very manageable waiting list.

Achieving maintenance objectives while responding to community issues was, and always will be, a parallel goal within the Halifax Housing Authority. The focus on upgrading was not limited to merely the preservation of the structure. Instead, the aim was to help satisfy the needs of the community through increased comfort, convenience and security. To this end, total modernization and improvement commitments for 1990 were $3,314,330, up from the previous year. This increase is seen as a positive indication of the funding partners support for the Housing Authority's current initiatives and long-term goals.

Uniacke Square

Strengthening communities by fostering self-help programs and group activities is central to the Authority's operational philosophy. With so many active tenant groups contributing to the well-being of residents it is not surprising that the Uniacke Square Tenants' Association is also active and growing. The list of new or accelerated programs is long: a few stand out as representative of the kinds of good ideas motivated tenants can turn into reality.

Young children can now have a good solid breakfast on their way to school through the Associations Youth Breakfast Program. It is well known that a full tummy is an excellent start to a positive and fulfilling day.

Using self-help as an operation basis, a Youth Support Group has been started to provide a forum for young people. Through the interaction of the group it is hoped that children facing a multitude of problems can vent frustrations, establish a better self image and seek and find the correct information to help them in problem solving.

Uniacke Square's Parent Resource Centre offers significant programs to residents. Tutorial assistance, with the help of Halifax City Schools, is available for children in the grade three to four category. The Grass Roots Grocery is doing well and supplies families with fresh nutritious food items at low cost. The Grocery has grown from $140 per month in business to $3,000 in a short time!

The $8 million Uniacke Square regeneration project, jointly funded by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Province of Nova Scotia, was officially completed in 1990. A public ceremony in September was held to mark the occasion. The opening was attended by representatives of both Federal and Provincial Departments of Housing, the Public Housing Tenants'Association Ward 3, The Halifax Housing Authority, the Office of the Mayor of the City of Halifax and the Premier's Office, as well as approximately one

Opening Day at Uniacke Square: From left to right - Dr. Margaret Ellison, Chairperson, H.H.A., Carol Gabriel, President of Public Housing Tenants' Association, Ward 3; The Honourable Alan Redway, former Federal Minister of Housing, Yvonne Carvery, past President of the Public Housing Tenant's Association, Ward 3 and The Honourable Roger Bacon, former Premier of Nova Scotia and Minister of Housing.

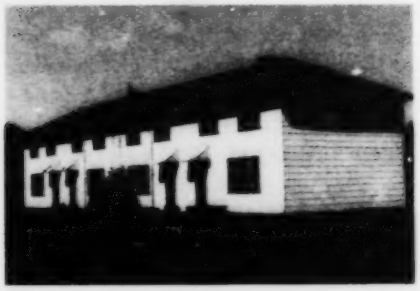
hundred and fifty residents of Uniacke Square.

This is perhaps the most visible of the projects undertaken by the Housing Authority and with renovations now complete, transformations to more than just buildings are evident. In a few short months, examples of changes in resident attitudes, community development awareness and the neighbourhood atmosphere are recognizable.

Mulgrave Park

Mulgrave Park is well-known within the Halifax Housing Authority for resident leadership in terms of individual and group activities and programs. The Resource Centre Concerned Residents Committee (R.C.C.R.C.) was instrumental in the installation of new playground equipment, a must for the growing number of active children, and the Committee celebrated their first anniversary with a community dinner and dance. They also sponsored the after-school tutoring program, a teen centre, community socials, the Annual End of Summer Community Barbecue and an evening of Christmas caroling with residents and staff of the Housing Authority.

The Resource Centre Concerned Residents Committee was successful in obtaining grants to sponsor Volunteer and Life Skills Programs for women from the community. Four women have enrolled in Life Skills training and two have taken further training and are now employed. In addition, two youth workers were hired by the R.C.C.R.C., under the Summer Job Strategies Program, to keep teenage youths positively occupied. These youngsters, with the help of parents assisting as volunteers, were involved in a variety of challenging activities.



Bayers Park residence before renovations.

A group of teens completed the Red Cross babysitting course and are now working for the Resident's Committee to babysit during committee meetings and at other times.

Significant physical changes also took place within this community. Projects to retrofit modern pitched roofs and repaint exteriors of the maisonette style buildings were completed in 1990. In Aquitania Tower, work to install new elevators with larger cabs, sprinkler systems and an emergency generator began. To give the building a more pleasing aspect, a contemporary main entrance and lobby will be added on Richmond Street. These alterations will help to bring these buildings into line with the overall philosophy of providing community enrichment through improved safety, security and visual appeal.

Bayers Park - the new look.

Westwood/Bayers Park

The Halifax Housing Authority actively supports tenant groups. In Westwood/Bayers Park a three-bedroom unit was leased to the Community Action Committee and shortly thereafter a drop-in centre for youth was opened followed by a children's arts and crafts program.

The after school programs at the drop-in centre are a considerable success with children lining up to get in a good half hour before opening time. Tutoring is available there for those who ask for it.

The Child Care Committee also obtained funding for a transition program for women wanting to gain access to skill training or employment. A three unit building, provided by the Halifax Housing Authority, will house both the on-site daycare provided and the skill training. All aspects of this program should be operational soon.

Some Notable Successes

In keeping with the Authority's goal of fostering community identity and growth, a major study was conducted in Westwood/Bayers Park area by an independent consulting firm. The purpose of the study was to identify the needs of the community and to make recommendations in the form of a master plan, upon which any future development of the 14 acre property could be based. The Housing Authority is hopeful that this plan will receive broad acceptance by the funding partners so that implementation may proceed.

In terms of physical changes, six buildings in Bayers Park underwent extensive renovations. Included in the project were the renewal of roofs, exterior siding, windows, doors, kitchens, bathrooms and electrical systems. Perhaps the most important aspect of the renovations is the upgrading of electrical panels and rewiring throughout entire residences. These important renovations received universal acceptance by the residents and also by those who look forward to similar improvements to their buildings in years to come.

Other programs and renewal projects undertaken in Westwood Park which will improve comfort and security for residents include retrofitting new pitched roofs on seven maisonette style buildings, apartment washer/dryer hook ups, picture window replacement and security door and deadbolt installation.

Greystone Community

As the communities within the Halifax Housing Authority's mandate grow and mature, notable success stories come to light. Within the Greystone Community there are two; one is Cranberry Court Day Care, the other is the Greystone Learning Centre.

Seventeen years ago, interested residents in Greystone helped start a Day Care Centre that today is the envy of many communities in Metro. Occupying three housing units, the Centre provides qualified care to 39 children ranging from toddler to school age. There are six full-time daycare instructors and one full-time cook and housekeeper.

The Greystone Learning Centre provides much-needed help to children.

The learning programs at the Centre stress the development of the whole child with particular emphasis on social interaction. Nutrition is also deemed to be very important and menus are varied and represent one third of the Canada Food Guide daily requirements for the appropriate age group.

All in all the Day Care Centre in Greystone is worth a good deal of notice - and this certainly has been coming their way, judging by the number of interested visitors from other developments looking for workable models of first-rate day care.

Tenant initiative is the foundation for the successes in Greystone. One of the prerequisites for creating programs that work is assessing needs correctly. The new Learning Centre at Greystone is an example of a positive application of these principles. Begun a year ago by the Greystone Tenants' Association with $1,000 in funding from the Halifax Housing Authority and Metro United Way, the Learning Centre has this year received a grant from the Atlantic Health Unit in Bedford of $4,500.00, to be spread over two years.

Seen by many as an inspiring model of the creative power of tenant involvement in their own lives, the Learning Centre assists in the learning process for children and adults of all

The Cranberry Court Day Care in operation.

ages. For school children in need of tutoring there are after-school programs. Teenagers receive much-needed information on how to access the many counselling and self-help services available in Metro and adults are given one-on-one instruction to help overcome the estimated 45% illiteracy rate in the adult community.

To help stimulate interest in the adult programs available at the Learning Centre, the Tenants' Association holds "block" parties. These are popular events with contests, entertainment, music and food for residents. It is hoped that through this kind of informal contact, more adults will overcome their shyness about going back to school.

Although only in operation for one year, many people from other communities have contacted the Centre to obtain information which might be helpful in setting up similar community spirited enterprises. Some have come from as far away as Newfoundland. The Federal Minister of the Status of Women, The Honourable Mary Collins has also been a guest at the Learning Centre.

The Greystone Learning Centre is staffed by tenant volunteers and a coordinator salaried by the Housing Authority. Located in a housing unit donated by the Authority, the Learning Centre uses materials and facilities donated by the Authority and the Spryfield Lions Club.

Seemingly not content with just one or two successful programs, the Greystone tenants also run a hot lunch program for students at Rockingstone Heights school. Administered through the Tenants' Association, and supported extensively by the Social Services Department of the City of Halifax, the program provides a hot nutritious lunch for some fifty children per day for one dollar each.

Providing additional amenities and improved comfort and security for residents was another venue for our community focus in the Greystone Community during 1990. The window replacement program, already in its fourth year, provided residents in over eighty units with new windows. Work which will provide each tenant with a washer/dryer hook-up was begun and the last phase of a program to provide security entrance doors and deadbolts for each residence was started.

Gordon B. Isnor Manor(Seniors)

The enhanced profile of this tenant community was rewarded by several grants and donations from organizations within the city. In addition, the New Horizons Committee was successful in obtaining a second 18 month grant to pay a coordinator and to continue and expand existing programs. A luncheon program, foot care clinic, hair dresser services, education and information seminars and a bi-weekly movie night are a few of the events that assist in the development of a better community within a very large senior citizens building.

Recreation

A family that plays together, grows together. Recreation within the many communities nurtured by the Authority is aimed squarely at helping children and young adults develop positive interpersonal skills and attitudes.

Although all of the contact and dialogue within the community and its young people is deemed to be significant, some programs and events do stand out either in terms of one-on-one assistance or information dissemination which directly help children.

The hiring of a Life Skills Coordinator to develop novel ways of presenting information on drugs and its abuse was one such program. The introduction of the Reality Game that gave the children the opportunity to learn valuable skills about money management was introduced. The game was well received and taught participants how to compare prices and the relative importance of items, especially important for those on low or fixed incomes.

Basketball never loses its appeal - basketball camp

Arrangements were made to have the children of the public housing projects participate in sporting events in other inner-city communities throughout the city area. This involvement and the discussions with the staff gave youth the opportunity to review positive aspects of their own community.

A Bake Program was started in the fall to assist the children in developing skills and knowledge about how to prepare a healthy snack or lunch. Children enjoyed sampling the goodies and were given the opportunity to take samples and recipes home.

Once again this year the staff of Recreation were active in a program which allows children involved in the Criminal Justice System to perform their community service hours in their own community. The goal is to help the children develop realistic work habits and to begin to develop a sense of the importance of work and that it is one of the supporting aspects of society.

HALIFAX HOUSING AUTHORITY
BALANCE SHEET

DECEMBER 1990

ASSETS

	December 31,1990	December 31,1989
Current Assets		
Cash	$ 9,224	$ 6,998
Accounts Receivable	116,576	107,828
Due from Tenants' Deposit Fund	8,996	11,257
Inventories	108,663	100,111
Prepaid Expenses	23,442	
	266,901	226,194
Tenants' Deposits	108,384	106,367
TOTAL ASSETS	$ 375,285	$ 332,561

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities		
Cheques Issued in Excess of Funds on Deposit	$ 19,132	$ 377,928
Rent Received in Advance	270,235	216,005
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	1,643,309	1,017,429
	1,932,676	1,611,362
Tenants' Refundable Deposits	108,384	106,367
Partnership Accounts		
Capital (deficits)		
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	$(3,773,304)	$(3,415,641)
Province of Nova Scotia	3,562,090	2,746,886
City of Halifax	(1,454,561)	(716,413)
	(1,665,775)	(1,385,168)
TOTAL LIABILITIES & DEFICIT	$ 375,285	$ 332,561

Note: The Halifax Housing Authority does not own the properties but manages them on behalf of its major contributor, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

HALIFAX HOUSING AUTHORITY

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31,1990.

	Budget 1990	Actual 1990	Actual 1989
REVENUE			
Rent	$ 5,916,800	$ 5,836,482	$ 5,730,156
Electricity	146,580	146,580	119,520
Sundry	129,026	171,671	140,638
	6,192,406	6,154 ,733	5,990,314
Less Bad Debts	28,000	58,742	62,983
	$ 6,164,406	$ 6,095,991	$ 5,927,331
EXPENDITURES			
Administrative	$ 1,443,600	$ 1,487,192	$ 1,311,317
Utilities	1,736,950	1,859,929	1,693,561
Other Operating	2,479,153	2,472,635	2,362,982
Maintenance	2,611,480	2,372,029	2,473,811
Modernization and Improvements	3,042,593	2,444,952	1,991,504
Municipal Taxes	1,085,000	1,108,696	1,065,912
Amortization of Partnership Investments	5,057,690	5,172,503	5,227,920
	17,456,466	16,917,936	16,127,007
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE*	$11,292,060	$10,821,945	$10,199,676

* Since rents paid by our tenants are not expected to cover operating costs, the resulting loss must be subsidized. The net operating loss is shared by the three levels of government; 75% by CMHC, 12.5% by the Province of Nova Scotia, and 12.5% by the City of Halifax.

People Make the Difference

Employee Appreciation

The contribution made by Halifax Housing Authority employees in building better communities and contributing to the success of the effectiveness of the Authority, was recognized at the Employee Appreciation Event held in March. Individual awards were presented for Contribution to the Authority, Contribution to the Community and Personal Achievement and employees were recognized for Perfect Attendance.

Mr. Joe Redmond with his 25 Year Service Award.

Recognition was given to twelve staff members for 5 to 15 years of service with special attention going to two persons who served for 20 and 25 years respectively.

The importance of Group Teamwork was pinpointed with a Special Award for the staff of the Halifax West office.

On another front, 20 of the Authority's employees received Safe Driving Certificates from the Nova Scotia Highway Safety Council.

Awards Night - Halifax Housing Authority Employees relax and enjoy.

Mr. Manny Grouse received a special Community Service Award for Volunteer Work.

Dr. Margaret Ellison, Chairperson for the H.H.A. presents a special token of appreciation to Joe Redmond.

Community Service

The selection, development and training of employees assists in the management of housing related resources. The resources provide quality physical environments and opportunities for social development for families and seniors living within the buildings administered by the Housing Authority. Through on-going programs the Housing Authority helps build on existing community awareness and pride. In 1990 two Community Relations Workers were hired to help senior citizen tenants meet their own needs and improve their quality of life. With approximately 1,227 senior citizens units under the management of the Authority, these two Community Workers are hard at work delivering a wide range of services. Included in these is the management of tenant problems and issues, fostering tenant groups, counselling, and acting as resource persons. Services are provided both in direct terms with the tenants and also in terms of liaison with agencies and organizations that can help the senior population.

Two other Community Relations Workers are employed by the Housing Authority to provide assistance to the property management team in the area of family tenants. Many of the services provided mirror those just mentioned but the actual contact and implementation of programs is more directed at the 1,313 or so families living within the jurisdiction of the Authority.

In their role of striving to provide better service to tenants, Halifax Housing Authority staff made good use of courses in Emergency First Aid, Heartsaver CPR, Safe Driving, Electricity, Refrigeration, Stress Management and Technology regularly offered as a part of employee development programs.

The Authority also assisted individuals by offering training opportunities for students enrolled in Business Education, and the Job Strategies: Job Entry and Training Program. These programs assisted individuals in the tenant population directly.

The Application Process

The Authority's mandate is to provide affordable housing to Halifax residents as follows:

1) senior persons (over age 58)
2) parent(s) with dependent child(ren)
3) persons with disabilities, who are able to live independently
4) applicants must have lived in Halifax 12 consecutive months in the last 3 years

All applicants who apply for housing receive a home visit to review their eligibility and circumstances. Applicant's needs are assessed on their present living and financial circumstances to determine their priority for housing. Accommodations are allocated based on family size and need. This system is designed to help those people who are residents of Halifax who are in need of decent, affordable accommodation. When a vacancy occurs, the eligible applicant with the greatest need for the vacancy available, is offered accommodation.